1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5



from trees. Besides the *hambara* other species including the small stingless bee supply a considerable quantity. The first two months of our sojourn in the Vedda country (January and February) was at a time when honey was particularly scarce, and even at the end of March and in April it was not abundant, yet such was the courtesy of the Veddas that each community managed to make us a small present of honey, though this often entailed a long search and the combs were frequently full of grubs. In two communities only, which were better off than the others, namely Danigala and Kulukalaeba, were we given large pots of strained honey, the remains of the previous year's store.

The manner in which *hambara* colonies are regarded as property has been discussed in Chapter v. Writing in 1886 Nevill says, "Honey forms a great part of their diet. It is often fresh in large quantities, wax and all; combs with young bees in them being considered especially wholesome. It was also the practice formerly to store strips of dried meat in honey, filling in a cavity of some tree with it, the cavity being first lined with clay. At present they barter away their surplus meat and honey, during the hunting season, and keep no store for the rainy season. This often brings privation and is one cause of the rapid decrease in their numbers.

"They tell me their health is never so good as when their food largely consists of yams and honey.

"To procure honey they rapidly cut open hollow trees, even of the hardest wood; and to take the hives of the large black bambara bee, they make long ladders of cane, called 'rang kendiya,' by which they descend precipices, and cut off the combs adhering to their sides.

"They do this at night, generally, as the bees are not so savage then; and smoke them with a sort of resin. The hives are often cut off with a sort of wooden sword, made for the occasion. These frail ladders swing fearfully, and the task is so dangerous, only the boldest and most athletic attempt it. While engaged on the task they sing lustily, songs specially made, which appease the spirit of the rock, and prevent him from dashing the hunter off the ladder. They also go about

1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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the work with songs, so as to get up a certain degree of excitement, necessary to carry them through the task. A song is chanted, and a little honey sprinkled for the spirits, before the combs are cut off the rock[1]."

Fig. 19.
*Masliya* × $\frac{1}{12}$.

Before honey collecting as many pots as possible are made and old pots and gourds are overhauled. The wooden sword which Nevill mentions is probably the *masliya* (fig. 12). This is a stout stick about 2½ metres long with four prongs at one end, which the Vedda carries hanging by a loop from his forearm and which he uses to detach the comb and convey it into the vessel called a *malu-dema* in which the honey is collected. This is also carried hanging from the forearm and should be made of deer's hide so that it may not be broken against the rocks as the honey collector swings to and fro. Plate LXV shows a *malidema* collected at Sitala Wanniya. An arrow is also carried and is largely used in detaching the combs from the rock.

Before taking the honey a bundle of green leaves is set alight and lowered in order to stupefy the bees. The smoker is called *odiya* (Sin. *hula*) and the creeper attached to it *yotwella*[2]. Several men of the community join together to collect rock-honey, the whole spoil being equally divided without any special consideration for the owner of the land, though it seemed that the owner would decide when the honey should be collected. The women accompany their men to crags and gulleys where the *bambara* build their combs. They hold torches and sing while the honey is being collected.

Plate LXVI shows a gourd, used as a hive for a colony of the stingless bee, hanging outside one

[1] *Op. cit.* p. 190.

[2] For the use of these see Chapter IV where the pantomime of honey getting is described.

1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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# CHAPTER XIII

## MUSIC

By C. S. Myers.

### Introductory.

The account of Vedda music given in this section is based upon an examination of thirty-four phonographic records of songs obtained from the Veddas by Dr and Mrs Seligmann[1].

These songs are probably simpler in structure than any other native songs hitherto studied.

Nine of the tunes are composed of only two notes. In three others the tune consists also of two notes, but with the addition of one or more unimportant grace-notes. These twelve songs may be conveniently classed as belonging to Group A.

Twelve other songs consist of three notes only. These we shall class under Group B.

Nine songs contain four notes, and one consists of five notes. These we shall consider as Group C.

Of the songs in Group A, in no case is the range sensibly greater than our whole-tone interval. With the exception of two anomalous songs, no song in Group B has a range sensibly greater than our minor third. With one exception, no song in Group C has a range greater than a fourth.

There is evidence that the songs of Group A are more archaic than those of Groups B and C. For, unaware of the above system of classification, Dr Seligmann was asked to indicate those songs which appeared to him (on grounds of language, ceremonial, etc.) most probably archaic and those

[1 We received the manuscript of this chapter from Dr Myers in November 1909, but owing to our absence from England, publication was deferred for six months. Meanwhile, in the *Quarterly Magazine of the International Musical Society* (Year xi, Part 2, 1910) there appeared a short account of Vedda music by Herr Max Wertheimer, based on an examination of four phonographic records obtained by Frau M. Selenka. Dr Myers has thus had no opportunity of alluding to Herr Wertheimer's observations in this chapter.]

1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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533 which were likely to be modern or foreign. Of the ten songs which he considered to be probably archaic, four belong to Group A, four to Group B, and only two to Group C; while of those in which he suspected modern, or foreign influence, only one belongs to Group A, five to Group B, and five to Group C. None of the Sinhalese songs collected by Dr Seligmann belongs to Group A.

In this connection it is also noteworthy that the Sitala Wanniya Veddas are considered by Dr Seligmann to have been less exposed to outside influence than other Veddas, and that of the three songs sung by them belonging to Group C two are believed by him to be late or foreign. There are altogether eight songs of the Sitala Wanniya Veddas, in only two of which is an interval sung sensibly greater than a whole-tone.

While the Sitala Wanniya Veddas may be considered the most primitive, the Veddas of Dambani and Bulugahaladena are semi-civilised, having absorbed much Sinhalese culture, and the Bandaraduwa Veddas are also much affected by the Sinhalese, with whom they are now living. The Henebedda Veddas have only lately begun to be affected by the Sinhalese.

Not only is Vedda music primitive because the notes of each song are so few and the range so small, but also because the natives are ignorant of any other than vocal music. Dr Seligmann writes that the "uncontaminated Veddas," e.g. those of Sitala Wanniya, have no musical instruments whatever. Others, however, e.g. those of Henebedda, although they had no drums at the time of his visit, borrowed them, when opportunity offered, from the Sinhalese, especially for songs belonging to the *kolawaduwa* ceremony. The two oldest Vedda ceremonies, namely, the dancing round an arrow in order to get game (p. 213), and the *kirikoraha* ceremony in which the dance is round an offering of coconut milk (p. 218), were accompanied by the rhythmic slapping of the hands on the abdomen and thighs. At Bandaraduwa, the Veddas were found to possess drums of Sinhalese pattern and make.

The songs of the Veddas may be divided according to their purpose into two main classes, the one consisting of charms and invocations, the other of lullabies and songs sung for amusement. Dr Seligmann observes that among all Veddas the

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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invocation songs are accompanied by dance movement, and that the purpose of such song and dance is to produce possession by the *yaku* or spirits. 533

## Methods of Analysis.

The speed of the phonograph used for studying the records of these songs was so regulated that every record reproduced a tone $c' = 256$ vibrations per second, a tone of this pitch, emitted by a pitch-pipe, having been always sounded into the recording phonograph just before each record was taken by Dr Seligmann in the field. Consequently when the reproducing phonograph emitted the note, one was sure that the speed of this instrument agreed with that of the instrument into which the song had been sung. That is to say, the reproducing phonograph reproduced the exact tempo and pitch of the recorded song. 126

A rough notation was then made of the song, a metronome being employed to determine its approximate tempo.

Finally a more accurate determination of the pitch of the various tones was made by means of an Appunn's Tonmesser, an instrument consisting of a box of carefully-attuned metal tongues, any one of which could be sounded at will by means of a bellows worked by the feet. The particular instrument employed contained 65 tongues, the pitch of each tongue differing by two vibrations per second from its neighbour and the extreme range being an octave, from $c''$ to $c'$, i.e. from 128 to 256 vibrations per second[1].

The songs are transcribed as accurately as our European notation allows. Bars are only inserted when the regularity of the rhythm clearly permitted their use. A + or − above a note indicates that it should be somewhat sharpened or flattened. Greater precision may be obtained by observing the numbers written beneath the notes. These give the mean vibration-frequency of the tone in question, obtained by comparison with the standard Tonmesser. The sign V indicates a "breath mark," i.e. a short rest during which the singer draws a breath.

[1] For further details in manipulation, the reader is referred to the writer's Essay on "The Ethnological Study of Music," in *Anthropological Essays presented to Edward Burnett Tylor*, Oxford, 1907, pp. 235—254.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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## NOTATION OF THE RECORDS.

### GROUP A.

No. 30. Invocation to the *Nae Yaku* sung by Kuma of Dambani.

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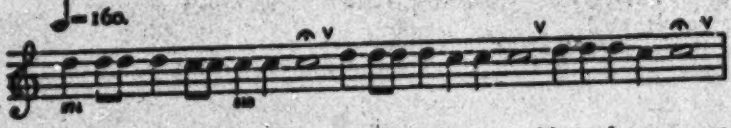
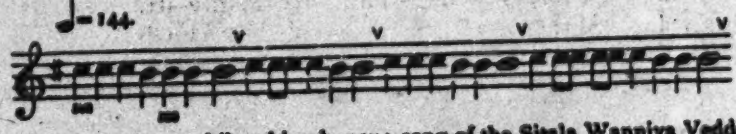
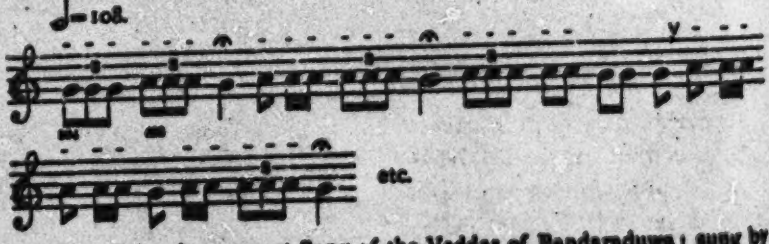
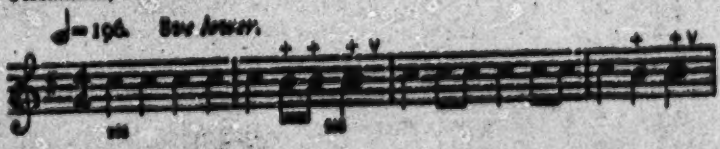
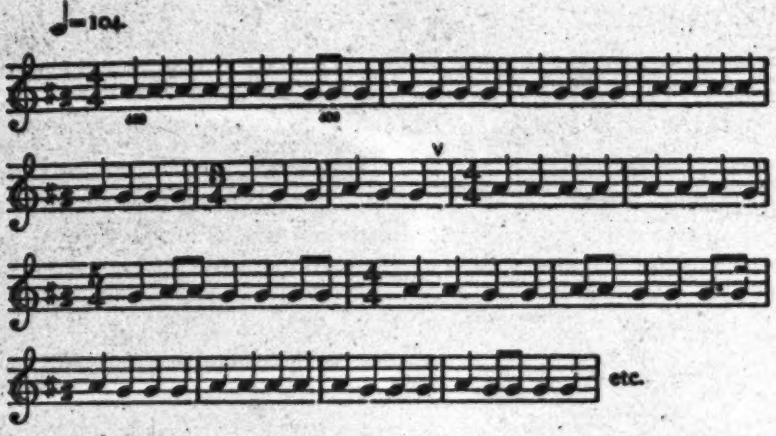
No. 22 A. Commemorating women whose husbands were treacherously killed while collecting honey; sung by Hudumenike of Bandaraduwa.

No. 21. Sung by women to men returning without honey; song of Sitala Wanniya Veddas.

No. 38. Sung while taking honey; song of the Sitala Wanniya Veddas.

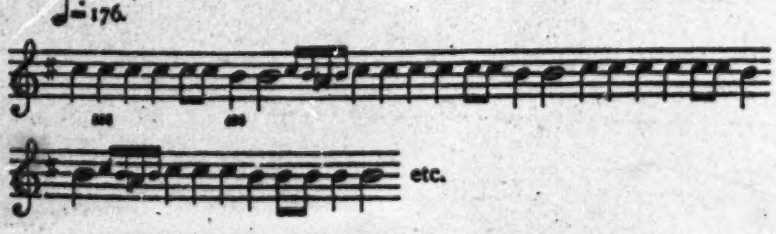



No. 11 (2). Amusement Song of the Veddas of Bandaraduwa; sung by Tissahami, the "Vedda Arachi."

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5



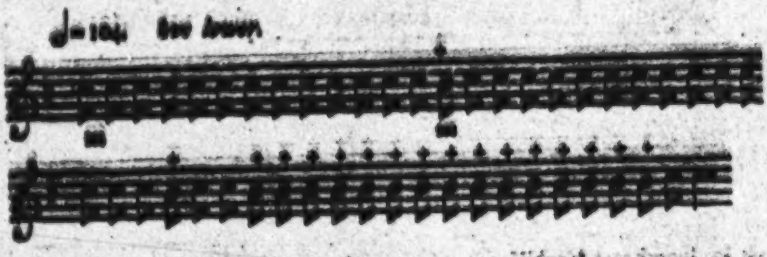
No. 18 (2). Song of the Bandaraduwa Veddas when driving monkeys.

No. 1 (1). Invocation at the *kirikoraha* ceremony of the Kovil Vanamai Veddas; sung by the "Vedda Arachi."

No. 1 (2). Invocation at the *kirikoraha* ceremony of the Kovil Vanamai Veddas; sung by the "Vedda Arachi."

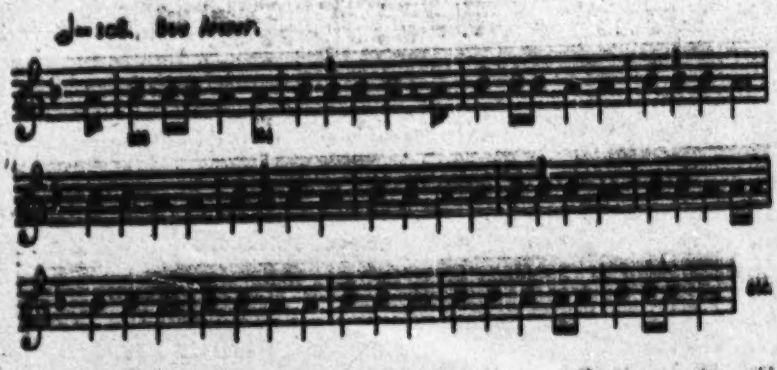



No. 19. Lullaby; sung by Hudumenike of Bandaraduwa.

No. 32. Invocation sung during ceremony to exorcise *Yaka* from the sick. 533



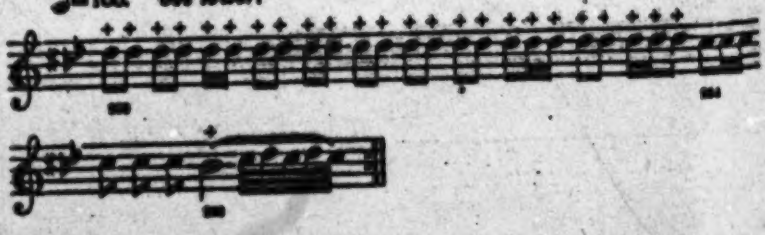

No. 42. Song (*Tandina* etc.), sung by the Vidane (headman) of the Dambani Veddas.




No. 43. Song (*Takgdla Sindu*), sung by Kuma of Dambani. The tune is that of No. 42, but the tones are *e* and *f*, corresponding to 160 and 171 vibrations per sec.

## GROUP B.

No. 30(1). Invocation at the *Rawana* ceremony of the *Yaka* and *Yakini* of Walimbegala.



1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-S (1907-1908) 1911
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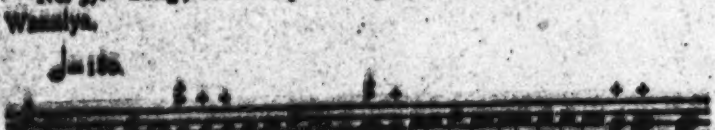
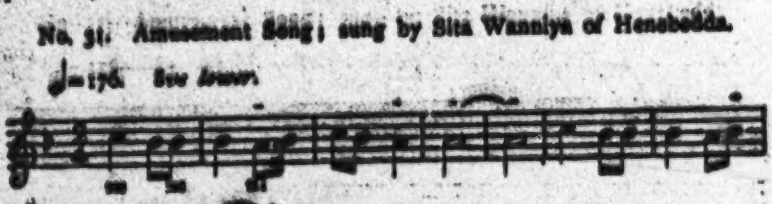
No. 29. Song; the first part sung by Tandi, wife of Handuna of Sitala Wanniya.

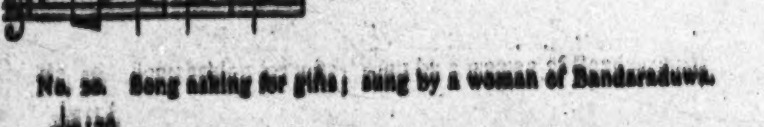



The second part sung by the husband to the same tune but in different pitch ♪=♪♯g.

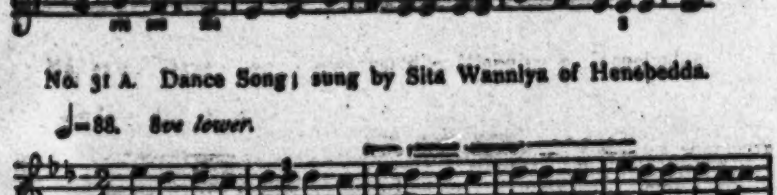
No. 31. Amusement Song; sung by Sita Wanniya of Henebedda.



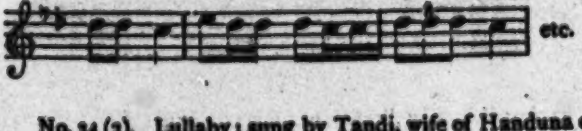

No. 32. Song asking for gifts; sung by a woman of Bandaraduwa.




No. 31 A. Dance Song; sung by Sita Wanniya of Henebedda.




No. 34 (2). Lullaby; sung by Tandi, wife of Handuna of Sitala Wanniya.



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No. 27. Invocation of the Mahayakino at the *kolamaduwa* ceremony; sung by Handuna of Henbedda.

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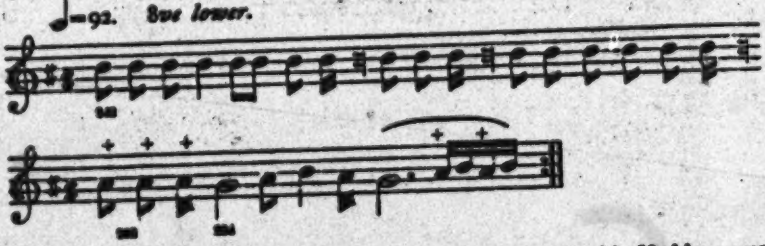
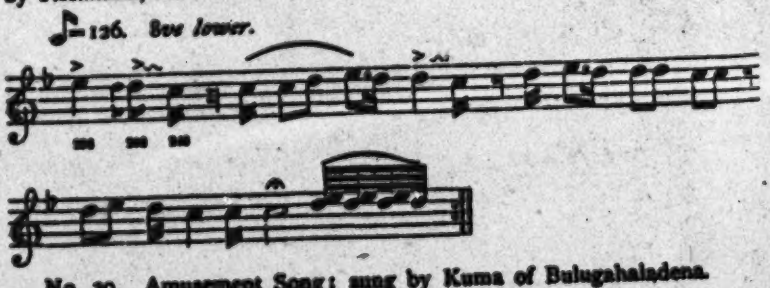
No. 36 (2). Amusement Song; sung by Handuna of Sitala Wanniya.

No. 29. Invocation to the *Nae Yaku*; sung by Wannaku of Uniche.

No. 2. *Maligi*, a honey-collecting song of the Henebedda Veddas; sung by Tissahami, the "Vedda Arachi."

No. 39. Amusement Song; sung by Kuma of Bulugahaladena.

1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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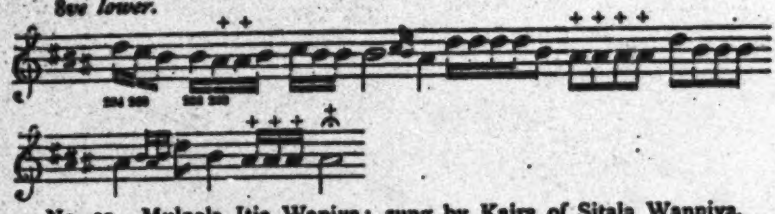
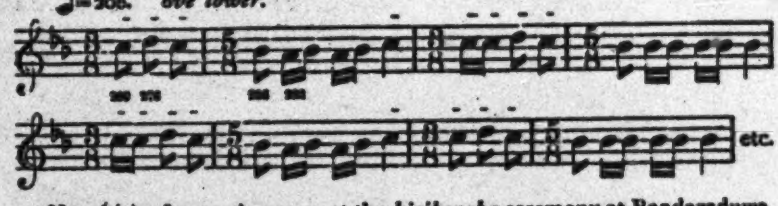
No. 14 (2). Invocation used by the Bandaraduwa Veddas; sung by a Sinhalese[1].

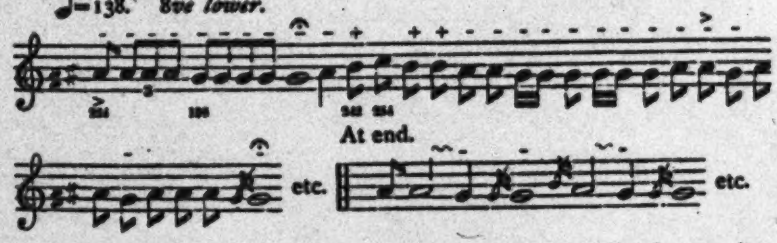
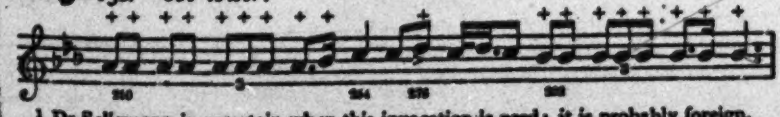
## GROUP C.

No. 32. Invocation of Bambura Yaka; sung by Handuna of Sitala Wanniya.




No. 33. Mulpola Itia Waniya; sung by Kaira of Sitala Wanniya.




No. 26 (1). Invocation sung at the *kirikoraka* ceremony at Bandaraduwa.

No. 53 (1). Sinhalese rice-harvesting song; sung at Hemberewa (see footnote, p. 356).

[1] Dr Seligmann is uncertain when this invocation is used; it is probably foreign.

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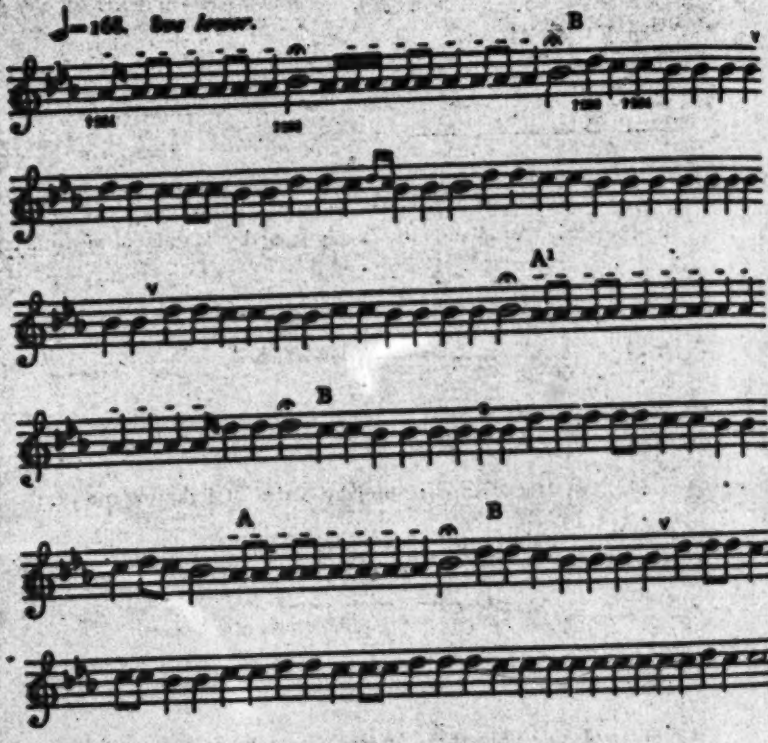
No. 44. Song when taking honey; sung by Peromala of Henebedda.

No. 28 A. Song commemorating two women who committed suicide (cf. p. 323); sung by Wannaku of Bandaraduwa.

No. 34 (1). Lullaby; sung by Tandi, wife of Handuna of Sinhi Wanniya.

1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-6 (1907-1908) 1911
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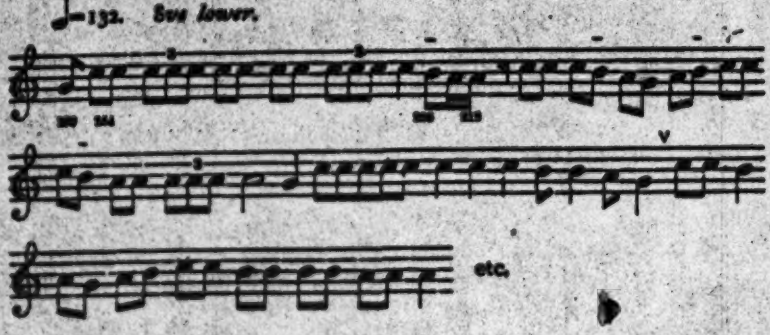
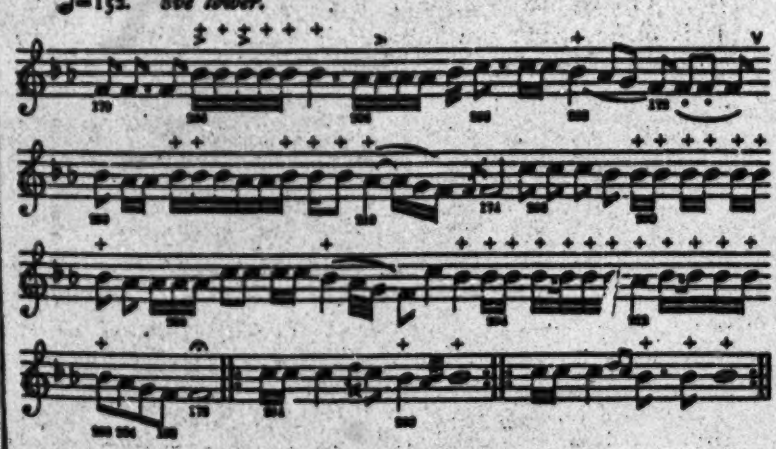
No. 51. Sinhalese song; sung at Alutnuwara at night while watching the crops (see footnote, p. 356).

No. 5 (2). Invocation to Bilindi Yaka and Kande Yaka at the Kirikoraha ceremony.

No. 41. Invocation by the Dambani Veddas of the *Nae Yaka*.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5



## Analysis of the Intervals.

### *The Songs of Group A.*

533 The two columns headed "quotients" and "cents" in the accompanying table are obtained from the transcript by the following means:

| Song No. | Quotients | Cents |
|---|---|---|
| 42 | 1·075 | 125 |
| 43 | 1·075 | 125 |
| 38 | 1·099 | 164 |
| 32 | 1·110 | 168 |
| 21 | 1·104 | 171 |
| 11 (2) | 1·104 | 171 |
| 1 (2) | 1·121 | 198 |
| 40 | 1·121 | 200 |
| 22 A | 1·125 | 205 |
| 18 (2) | 1·128 | 208 |
| 1 (1) | 1·133 | 216 |

The quotient is the result of dividing the larger by the smaller of the two numbers which express the vibration-frequencies of the two tones in each of the songs of this group. Thus in the case of Song No. 42, 230 divided by 214 (the figures given in the transcript) yields the quotient 1·075. The cents are hundredth parts of our own tempered semitone[1].

It is obvious that the intervals intended to be used in the songs of Group A are three in number. The averages are given in the following table:

| Interval | Quotient | Cents |
|---|---|---|
| ($\alpha$) | 1·075 | 125 |
| ($\beta$) | 1·104 | 168 |
| ($\gamma$) | 1·126 | 205 |

Of these the largest ($\gamma$) is approximately our own whole-tone interval, the smallest ($\alpha$) amounts to five-eighths of our whole-tone interval, while the intermediate interval ($\beta$) is almost

[1] Various methods for calculating cents from the vibration-numbers of an interval are given by Ellis in his annotated translation of Helmholtz's *Sensations of Tone* (3rd edition, London, 1895), pp. 456—461.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5



exactly half-way between the values of the two extremes[1]. The interval (α) occurs only in two songs sung by different individuals, who, however, were both Dambani Veddas. The Dambani singer of No. 43 is also responsible for No. 40, the interval of which falls in (γ). 533

*The Songs of Group B.*

| Song Number | Quotients | | Cents | | Range Quotients | Range Cents |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 29 | 1·043 | 1·137 | 73 | 223 | [1·186] | [299] |
| 36 (2) | 1·050 | 1·124 | 84 | 208 | 1·180 | 287 |
| 2 | 1·057 | 1·129 | 96 | 210 | [1·193] | [306] |
| 27 | 1·067 | 1·132 | 112 | 215 | [1·208] | [327] |
| 39 | 1·055 | 1·111 | 94 | 181 | [1·172] | [275] |
| 31 A | 1·061 | 1·114 | 102 | 187 | 1·182 | 289 |
| 34 (2) | 1·084 | 1·094 | 140 | 157 | 1·186 | 297 |
| 30 (1) | 1·087 | 1·104 | 144 | 172 | [1·200] | [316] |
| 31 | 1·084 | 1·121 | 140 | 197 | 1·215 | 337 |
| 37 | 1·072 | 1·095 | 121 | 157 | [1·175] | [279] |
| 20 | 1·132 | 1·122 | 199 | 219 | 1·270 | 414 |

The columns headed "quotients" and "cents" in the foregoing table measure the intervals—in this Group the pairs of

[1] For purposes of comparison, the following details may prove useful:

| *Interval.* | *Quotient.* | *Cents.* |
|---|---|---|
| Our tempered semitone ... ... ... | 1·059 | 100 |
| ,, ,, tone ... ... ... ... | 1·122 | 200 |
| ,, ,, minor third ... ... ... | 1·189 | 300 |
| ,, ,, major third ... ... ... | 1·260 | 400 |
| ,, ,, fourth ... ... ... ... | 1·335 | 500 |
| ,, ,, tritone ... ... ... ... | 1·414 | 600 |
| ,, ,, fifth ... ... ... ... | 1·498 | 700 |
| Our just (or pure) semitone (15 : 16) ... | 1·06 | 111·731 |
| ,, ,, ,, minor tone ( 9 : 10) ... | 1·111 | 182·404 |
| ,, ,, ,, major tone ( 8 : 9) ... | 1·125 | 203·910 |
| ,, ,, ,, minor third ( 5 : 6) ... | 1·200 | 315·641 |
| ,, ,, ,, major third ( 4 : 5) ... | 1·250 | 386·314 |
| ,, ,, ,, fourth ( 3 : 4) ... | 1·3 | 498·045 |
| ,, ,, ,, tritone (32 : 45) ... | 1·406 | 590·224 |
| ,, ,, ,, fifth ( 2 : 3) ... | 1·500 | 701·955 |

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5



533 intervals—for the various songs as in the previous Group. The last column, headed "range," expresses (also in the form of quotients and cents) the interval between the highest and lowest notes of each song. When that interval is not actually sung but only calculated, the figures are enclosed in brackets. Song No. 14 (2) is omitted from this group as its range and structure are obviously different from the rest. Dr Seligmann independently characterises this song as "almost certainly foreign... I find it was sung by a Sinhalese. I should neglect it." Song 20 is again exceptional. Its range exceeds four semitones (400 cents), or a major third. Here again Dr Seligmann—having regard only to evidence of a non-musical character—observes that "the words of this song are very late." Song No. 37 is somewhat exceptional. The intonation, moreover, is not very reliable.

The remaining songs of this Group fall into three divisions, the averages for which are shown in the following table:

| Interval | Quotients | | Cents | | Range Quotients | Range Cents |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (δ) | 1·054 | 1·130 | 92 | 213 | 1·192 | 305 |
| (ε) | 1·059 | 1·112 | 98 | 184 | 1·177 | 282 |
| (ζ) | 1·085 | 1·106 | 142 | 175 | 1·200 | 317 |

It is evident that the range of notes in these three divisions is not sensibly different. It amounts approximately to our minor third.

This interval is divided in the case of divisions (δ) and (ε) into two intervals, one of which is somewhat smaller than our semitone, while the other is in (δ) larger, in (ε) smaller than our whole-tone.

In the case of division (ζ) the interval of a minor third is divided into two intervals which are much more nearly equal to one another. The same feature characterises Song No. 20, where the major third is almost equally bisected.

In only four of the eleven tunes of this group is an interval appreciably larger than a whole tone actually sung by the singer.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-6 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5



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This is shown by the unbracketed numbers in the columns headed "range." In No. 20 an interval of 414 cents (slightly exceeding a major third) is sung, but this song, as we have already observed, is exceptional. In Nos. 31 A and 34 (2), an interval somewhat less than a minor third is sung, in the former of 289, in the latter of 297 cents. In No. 31 the interval (337 cents) slightly exceeds a minor third.

The intervals sung in the anomalous song No. 14 (2) are of 467 and 269 cents.

The various average values of quotients and cents in the songs of groups A and B are set out in the following tables:

*Quotients.*

| I. | II. | III. | IV. | V. | VI. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1·054 | 1·075 | 1·085 | 1·104 | 1·126 | 1·177 |
| 1·059 | | | 1·106 | 1·130 | 1·192 |
| | | | 1·112 | | 1·200 |

*Cents.*

| I. | II. | III. | IV. | V. | VI. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 92 | 125 | 142 | 168 | 205 | 282 |
| 98 | | | 175 | 213 | 305 |
| | | | 184 | | 317 |

It will be noticed that the difference between I and II, III and IV, IV and V is about thirty cents, and that the difference between V and VI is about thrice this value.

### *The Songs of Group C.*

It will be remembered that the songs of this group contain four different notes. The intervals between the highest and lowest notes (maximal range), the intervals between alternate notes (an intervening tone omitted) and the intervals between

1; Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5



533 immediately successive notes are shown in the following table of quotients. Brackets indicate, as before, that the interval in question was not actually sung but only calculated.

| Song Number | Maximal range | Interval between alternate notes | | Interval between immediately successive notes | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 32 (also 46) | 1·23 | [1·17] | 1·13 | 1·10 | 1·06 | 1·06 |
| 33 | [1·24] | [1·17] | [1·17] | 1·10 | 1·06 | 1·06 |
| 53 (1) | [1·31] | [1·21] | [1·19] | 1·10 | 1·09 | 1·09 |
| 26 (1) | [1·28] | [1·22] | [1·13] | 1·13 | 1·09 | 1·05 |
| 34 (1) | 1·32 | [1·25] | [1·19] | 1·12 | 1·11 | 1·06 |
| 31 | 1·34 | [1·24] | 1·20 | 1·12 | 1·11 | 1·08 |
| 28 A | 1·35 | [1·26] | [1·17] | 1·15 | 1·09 | 1·07 |
| 44 | ? 1·37 | [? 1·29] | ? 1·19 | ? 1·16 | ? 1·12 | ? 1·06 |
| 5 (2) | 1·43 | 1·30 | ? 1·27 | ? 1·18 | 1·11 | 1·10 |
| 41 | 1·46 | 1·37 | 1·31 | 1·13 | 1·10 | 1·05 |

The songs appear to fall into four divisions. In the first of these the maximal range is expressed by the quotient 1·235—equal to 365 cents—(nearly a neutral third), and the intervals between successive notes are expressed by the quotients 1·06, 1·10,—equivalent to 101 and 165 cents respectively. In the third division, the maximal range amounts to 1·33 or 496 cents (almost exactly equal to a just fourth) while the successive notes average 1·06, 1·10 and 1·14, i.e. 101, 165, and 227 cents. A very similar interval in song No. 53 is trisected into almost equal intervals, each approximately of 165 cents. In the case of the last division, the maximal range averages 1·445, equivalent to 637 cents (an acute diminished fifth), and the intervals comprise again an almost pure fourth, a slightly exaggerated major third, and other intervals common to other songs of the group. Of the two songs in this division Dr Seligmann writes that in "No. 5.....there are signs of foreign influence in the invocation as it stands, but it has a good old Vedda basis," and that "No. 41 is probably late."

Hence the most significant of the smaller intervals between

[1] These songs are said to be Sinhalese, but in most respects they closely resemble the Vedda songs of this group and are therefore included in it.

I:Seligmann & Seligmann E-6 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5



successive notes occurring in the songs of Group C are equal to 101, 165, 227 cents, which are successively different by about 63 cents. But it will be remembered that the difference between certain intervals employed in Group B was found to be about 30 cents, half of the difference just observed. In Group C we have just found the neutral third of 365 cents divided into two intervals, one of 101 and the other of 165 cents, representing approximately three and five of these hypothetical units, each of 33 cents. The same intervals were found in the division of the fourth of 496 cents into 5, 3 and 7 of such units. Again in three songs of Group B, the average interval of 317 cents is divided into intervals of 142 and 175 cents, differing by 33 cents. In view, however, of the want of precision in intonation, it is difficult to believe that these differences are significant. 533

The value of the fourth, when actually sung in the songs 28, 34 (1), 51 of Group C, averages 1·337 or 503 cents. Consequently it is almost pure. A pure minor third is sung in No. 34 (1). A neutral third is sung in No. 32, the value of which is 1·235 or 365 cents. In No. 5 (2), the minor third which is sung is small, amounting to 1·176 or 281 cents. The diminished fifth and the fourth sung in No. 41 correspond respectively to 655 and 543 cents.

Of the smaller intervals, the interval of 165 cents is certainly one of the most important. It occurs frequently in Group C and also (as 168 cents) in Group A, where it is exactly midway between the other two intervals (125 and 205 cents) met with in this group.

### *Analysis of the Rhythm.*

In the majority of the songs the *time* is fairly regular, but the *accents* often recur irregularly owing to the variable numbers of syllables. The following extracts from the writer's note-book will serve to illustrate this general lack of regular measure:

No. 22 A. Want of regular accent; number of notes and *Rhythm* according to words.

No. 21. Irregular accent according to number of syllables (see notation).

No. 38. Time regular but without regular accent.

Allahabad & Bangalore 248 (1897-1900) 1811
AIS Vedda AIS



No. 1 (1). Frequent interpolation of extra beats owing to extra syllables. *Rate* of beats constant. Little or no grouping of beats into larger units (*i.e.* no measure, bar or tact). ● 533

No. 33. The words dictate the number of notes.

No. 20. Considerable variation in time and in number of notes, regulated by breathing and by number of syllables.

No. 26. With variations according to recitative.

No. 28. No regular accent.

In some songs, however, the measures were more obvious. Thus,

No. 51. Very rhythmical, but occasionally an odd syllable is inserted.

No. 5. Fairly regular, save for a few extra syllables.

In only a few was the rhythm very well marked, as the following extracts show:

No. 11 (2). Very regular rhythm and accent.

No. 18 (2). Very regular rhythm.

No. 34 (1). Regular save for breath-marks.

No. 14 (2). Strict tempo save for breath-marks.

No. 36. Strict time.

In five songs, the rhythm is particularly noteworthy owing to the occurrence of bars of five beats. Thus, in No. 18 (2), a bar of five beats is inserted three times in the course of the song. One of them is shown in the part transcribed. In No. 14 (2), a five-bar is introduced in strict time at the close of the tune. Again in Nos. 33, 34 (1), 36 (2) there are alternate groups of three and five beats. In other words a bar of eight beats is sub-divided into two bars containing three and five beats respectively.

With these exceptions and the striking exception of No. 20, no one of the songs is clearly in triple measure, although occasionally, e.g. in No. 22 A, a bar of three beats is introduced into a song.

Generally speaking, where the accent occurs sufficiently regularly for the measure to be apprehended, the accent is found to lie on the first of every two or four beats.

Haughton & Seligmann 3-5 (1907-1908) 1811
AX5 Vedda AX5



## General Character of Songs.

The songs have an exceedingly plain character, and are devoid of the ornamentation with which we meet in many examples of primitive music. The few embellishments which occur in Nos. 1 (1), 1 (2), 2, 29, 32, are quite slight and simple. They present a contrast in this respect when compared with Nos. 30 and 33, which are records of other than Vedda music from Ceylon. I am indebted to Mr R. R. Broome, B.A., of Christ's College, Cambridge, for their notation.

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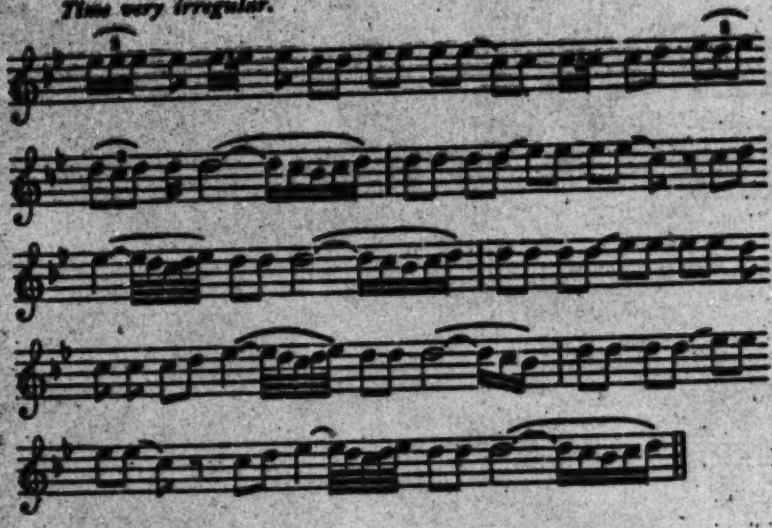
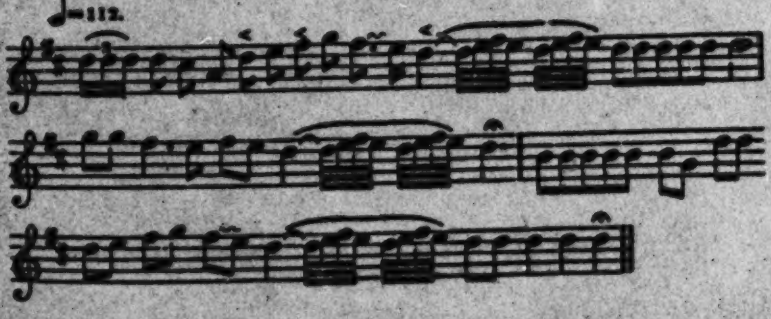
No. 30. Charm (reputed to be Arabic) sung by the Arachi of Girandura.
*Time very irregular.*



No. 23. Sinhalese Love Song.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-S (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5



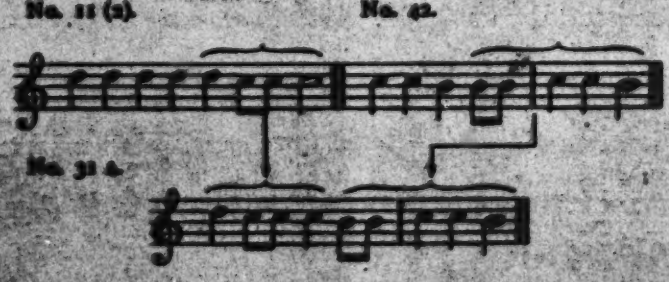
533 Another feature is the precision with which the notes are hit. There is not a single example of that *glissando* from note to note, which is so frequently met with among certain primitive peoples.

In only one song does more than one singer take part, and in this, No. 37, the second singer merely repeats the melody of the first when the latter has finished. There is hence no instance of two or more simultaneously sung notes.

But perhaps the most striking characteristic of Vedda music is the apparent feeling for tonality. In every song a tonic note is clearly present, which is, so to speak, the centre of gravity of the melody, emphasised by accent, duration, or frequency—a note to which the melody seeks to return.

In the majority of songs of Groups A and B the melody starts from the highest tone and proceeds (directly or by an intermediate tone) to the tonic, which is consequently the lowest tone. This description essentially holds, (i) for all the songs in Group A, excepting the opening phrase of No. 38, which is distinct from the rest; (ii) for the twelve songs of Group B, excepting Nos. 36 (2) and 37, where the tune ascends from the tone below the highest before descending, and Nos. 14 (2) and 39 which ascend direct from the lowest (tonic) to the highest; and (iii)—but for the introduction of a leading note—for four of the songs in Group C.

The close similarity between the various songs of Group A is so obvious that no further comment is necessary to establish it.

It is not difficult to trace the development of many of the songs of Group B from those of Group A. For example:

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AXS Vedda AXS



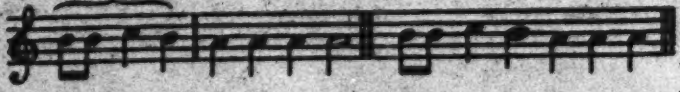
From the last song, No. 31 A, there is an easy transition to certain other songs of the same group, e.g. to 533

No. 31. No. 34 (2).

We can also indicate the relation between No. 42 of Group A and five other songs of Group B.

No. 42.

No. 36 (2). No. 37.

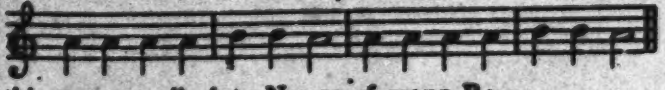


No. 2. No. 39.

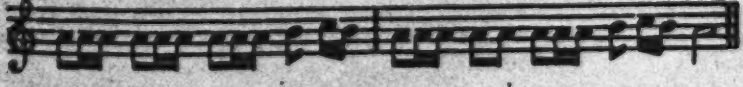
No. 27.

Again, No. 19 of Group A

by a change comparable to that occurring in the opening phrases of No. 38 easily becomes



and this passes easily into No. 39 of group B:—



1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5



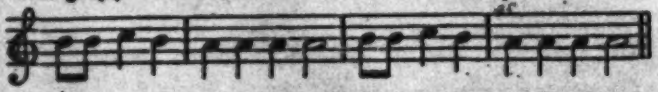
●533 The introduction of a fourth note into the melody is seen in its most elementary form in the case of song No. 44[1]. Here, a division into two phrases, A (modified at $A^1$) and B, is clearly possible. Of these B consists of three notes, and has the general characters of the songs of Group B, while A contains the tonic, the lowest tone of the phrase B, preceded by the tone below the tonic, that is to say, by the leading-note. The use of the leading-note is clearly foreshadowed in the opening phrase of Song No. 38 in Group A. Four other songs in Group C, Nos. 28, 34 (1), 51 and 5 (2), have a definite leading-note. In Nos. 28, 34 (1) and 51, the leading-note is followed immediately by the highest note, whence a descent is made to the tonic as in the songs of Group B. Hence four of the songs in Group C only differ in structure from those of Group B by the addition of a leading-note.

No. 53 (1) is exceptional in that it starts from the tonic and ascends by intermediate tones to the highest, whence a gradual descent is made to the tonic. It is a Sinhalese song.

No. 26 (1) should perhaps be classed in Group B,—of so little importance is the highest or fourth note introduced. Apart from its opening phrase, it may be compared with Nos. 36 (2) and 37 of that group, both of which ascend from the note below the highest, before descending to the tonic.

Only one other song of Group C remains unmentioned. And this, No. 33, is extremely like No. 36 (2) of Group B, not only in structure but in the curious rhythm. An unimportant semi-tone is introduced beneath the tonic.

No. 36 (2).



No. 33.

There are so few tones in these songs that we can hardly expect to meet with a strict division of the melody into phrases

[1] See [illegible], p. 331.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-S (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5



Yet in songs Nos. 26 (1), 38, and 44 there are opening phrases distinct from the body of the song. And in No. 44 this opening phrase (marked A in the transcript) is repeated in its original (or, as at $A^1$, in a modified) form during the song. The melody is thus very easily divisible into a series of alternating phrases, attaining a higher stage of development in this respect than any other of the melodies under investigation. Nos. 26 (1) and 41 (both of which Dr Seligmann suspects to be of modern date) have a short terminal phrase, clearly separable and differing in character from the remainder of the song.

## Conclusions and Comparisons.

In the Vedda music we seem to meet with the very beginnings of melody-building. At the lowest stage (Group A) we have a two-note song descending from the higher to the lower tone. Then (in Group B) a third note is added higher in pitch than either of the preceding. Lastly (in Group C) a fourth note is introduced, generally a tone below the tonic, the influence of which throughout most of the songs is very clearly felt.

There is no other people in whose music the gradual construction of melody on these simple lines can be discerned. If we turn to Australian music[1], we usually meet, it is true, with small intervals between successive tones, but the range of tones throughout any one song is considerable. Among the American Indians it is also rare to find a song consisting only of two notes. Only four of the forty-three American Indian melodies collected by Abraham and v. Hornbostel[2] consist of two notes, and in three of these the interval is a neutral or minor third. Similar results are yielded by the older collections of Baker[3] and Stumpf[4]. The music of the natives of New Guinea, Borneo and Africa is decidedly more complex than that of the Veddas.

Turning to the music of Southern India, we find that only two or three of thirteen phonographic records, obtained from

[1] Karl Hagen, *Ueber d. Musik einiger Naturvölker*, Hamburg, 1891.

[2] Phonographirte Indianer Melodien aus British Columbia, in the *Boas Memorial Volume*, New York, 1906, pp. 447—474.

[3] *Ueber d. Musik d. nordamerik. Wilden*, Leipzig, 1882.

[4] *Vierteljahrs. d. Musikwiss.*, 1886, S. 405—426.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-S (1907-1908) 1911
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natives of Gujar, Malabar and Tanjore[1], at all resemble in simplicity the Vedda music. Five of them have a range of tones compassing an octave, while three others range over a sixth. Of the three most primitive songs one is a prayer, the other two being children's songs. It cannot be said that in general character they very closely resemble the Vedda songs.

The intervals among the Veddas appear to have been developed by the successive addition of small intervals to those previously used. There are only two or three exceptional cases [Nos. 20, 34 (2), 53 (1)] in which the added intervals are approximately equal to the original; and these instances are possibly accidental. In nearly all the remaining songs of Group B, the additional third tone consists of approximately a semitone added above the whole-tone interval which starts from the tonic. The two intervals thus comprise a minor third. This minor third tends to be smaller than our own tempered or untempered interval. A major third occurs only in a single song, and a neutral third is also only once sung. In Group C, the fourth, when sung, is in most cases approximately true, although in one song it is smaller, in another decidedly larger, than our own tempered or untempered interval. A fifth occurs but in one song and is distinctly smaller than ours.

We can only conclude from these data that in the absence of musical instruments, musical intervals are by no means fixed among the Veddas, and that this want of fixity becomes more striking, the greater the number of notes introduced into the song. In dealing with the songs of Group A, we were able to range without difficulty the intervals under three heads. But with the songs of Groups B and C such classification became increasingly difficult and more uncertain.

From what we know of primitive music elsewhere, it was not to be expected that the Veddas would sing pure minor or major thirds. For a long time, even in European music, thirds were regarded as dissonant. What does, however, seem unusual, is that the fifth, in the one Vedda song in which it occurs, bears so little resemblance to the consonant interval which has the ratio 2 : 3. It is almost a quarter-tone flat. On the other hand, the

[1] *Sammelb. d. Internat. Musikgesellsch.* 1904, Bd v, S. 348—401.

1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-S (1907-1908) 1911
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fourth is several times sung nearly in the consonant ratio of 3:4. Inasmuch as the fifth is so much more consonant than the fourth, we should have expected to have found its intonation purer than the fourth.

For the same reason we might have expected to have found the fifth preferred to the fourth, but the fifth only occurs in one song, while the fourth is sung in several. But the intervals of the Veddas appear to have been developed, as we have already said, not by taking a harmonious interval and dividing it into smaller intervals, but by starting with small (and uncertain) intervals and adding further intervals to them. It is only in the more advanced songs (and these are very few in number) that relatively large intervals are sung. And here we appear first to meet with the influence of harmony in fixing the size of such consonant intervals. Despite the fact that to our ears tonality is so well-marked throughout the Vedda songs, the approximate consonance of intervals is only reached when the two tones immediately succeed one another.

As regards the rhythm of the Vedda songs, it is noteworthy that in Indian music Abraham and von Hornbostel found frequent instances of the interpolation of a 3- or a 5-pulse measure in music otherwise of common time. They note that change of rhythm is "so frequent that we are often unable to detect any constant primary rhythm at all, but are compelled to imagine a continual modification of measure[1]." This remark is applicable, as we have seen, to much of Vedda music, while in other Indian and Vedda songs a definite rhythm can be readily apprehended. In many parts of the world primitive music is characterised by "a delight in change and opposition of rhythm, and a demand that relatively long periods filled with measures of diverse length be apprehended as an organic whole or 'phrase'[2]." This is a characteristic of several of the Vedda songs.

[1] *Op. cit.* S. 398.
[2] C. S. Myers, *Brit. Journ. of Psychol.* 1909, Vol. I, p. 496.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

# CHAPTER XIV

## SONGS

533 In this chapter we give a number of Vedda songs for the transliteration and translation of which we are indebted to Mr Gunasekara.

It will be noted that a number of the songs are variants on a common theme; with the exception of No. IV (song asking for presents), the lullabies and the song sung while plucking *jak* fruit, all were sung for the enjoyment they caused or the amusement they produced—that is to say we could not discover that there were occasions on which any of these songs were sung specially and exclusively. Even the sad little song (No. VII) commemorating the suicide of two women[1], though it did not cause amusement, was by no means avoided and seemed to give a good deal of quiet satisfaction. The song sung by women to their husbands who returned empty handed from seeking honey, though doubtless sung on appropriate occasions, was also sung at other times and was considered rather a joke.

533 539 A number of the best known songs begin or end with a variant of the untranslatable lines

*Ṭan ṭaṉḍināṉan ṭaṉḍināṉi*
*Ṭūnan ṭaṉḍina ṭaṉḍināṉi*[2].

[1] The legend has been given on pp. 322 and 323.

[2] Mr Gunasekara by slightly altering these lines would obtain

*Ṭaṉ taṉ dināṉi taṉ taṉ dināṉi*
*Ṭūnān taṉ dina taṉ dināṉi*

which he would translate

May each be victorious! May each be victorious!
May he defeat those who are inimical to him! May he be victorious!

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5



Other songs begin with a variant of

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*Mamiṣi mamiṣi mādayiyā*

which may be translated

Oh great man! Oh great man! Oh great god!

or perhaps as Bailey writes

My departed one, my departed one, my god!

The following lullaby was sung at Banderaduwa by a woman called Hudumeniki to the air (No. 19) given on page 345.

I. *Rē-rē-rē*
*Ammī mōkaṭada āṭḍannī*
*Ammī gōṣiga tiliṭai*
*Ēkat nindama dīpawu dennā*
*Ammī mōkaṭada āṭḍannī*
*Ammī gōmala bokkaṭayi āṭḍannī*
*Ēkat nindama dewu dennā*
*Ammī mōkaṭada āṭḍannī*
*Ammī waḍḍurāgē ihaṭayi*
*Ēkat nindama dewu dennā*
*Ammī mōkaṭada āṭḍannī*
*Ammī rōsāgē ihaṭayi*
*Ēkat nindama dewu dennā*
*Rē-rē-rē*
*Ammī kalawaliṭa paṭuni*
*Nindīṭayi āṭḍannī*
*Nidigannā paṭūni*
*Nindīṭayi āṭḍannī*
*Rē-rē-rē*
*Ammā rē-rē-rē*
*Ammā mōkaṭa āṭḍannī*
*Ammā diṭi nāṭṭayi āṭḍannī*
*Ammī mōkaṭayi āṭḍannī*
*Ammī niḍi niḍuṇḍayi*
*Rē-rē-rē ammā.*

*Rē-rē-rē* Child, why are you crying? Child, is it for the fat of the monitor lizard? Give the whole of it (i.e. the fat). Child, why are you crying? Child, is it for the *gōmala* yams you are crying? Give all of them (i.e. the yams). Child, why are you crying? Child, is it for the head of the *wandura* monkey? Give the whole of it (i.e. the head). Child, why are you crying? Child, is it for the head of the *rilawā* monkey? Give the whole of it (i.e. the head).
*Rē-rē-rē*

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-8 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5.



533 Child, creeping child; are you crying for sleep? Sleeping child, are you
539 crying for sleep? *Rō-rō-rō* Darling, *Rō-rō-rō*
Darling, for what are you crying? Darling, is it for bathing you are crying? Child, what are you crying for? Child, is it for sleep? Darling, *Rō-rō-rō*.

The next lullaby was sung by Tandi of Sitala Wanniya; we do not know whether this is the lullaby the music of which is given on page 347 (No. 34 (2)) or on page 350 (No. 34 (1)).

II. *Ammita puṭuna*
*Ammē mokakada aṭahanne*
*Ammē ayita kiyanna*
*Ehē nidukma dredenna*
*Ammē mokakada aṭahanne*
*Ammē kapuvata kiyanna*
*Ehē nidukma dredenna*
*Ammē mokakdā aṭahanne*
*Ammē gōiha kiyanna*
*Ehē nidukma dredenna.*

Lovely babe, what do you cry for, child? Child, it is for the *ayita* yam. I will give the whole of it. Child, what do you cry for? Child, it is for *kapuvata* yam. I will give the whole of it. Child, what do you cry for? Child, it is for the fat of the monitor lizard. I will give the whole of it.

These lullabies though longer than those collected by Nevill closely resemble the latter, although they do not appear to contain the jokes and intentional absurdities which Nevill considered to exist in those he recorded[1].

The next song though not a lullaby was said to have been sung by a mother to her young children who were frightened at the oncoming of a thunder storm. It was taken down at Nilgala.

III. *Ākuṇihan aṇuhihan*
*Sat maduru kanḍiyēta giyā*
*Siluvan aṭipaṇuvalā widinagī nuvaṭā nuvaṭā*
*Balāpaṭa dunnā nam kalā paw dunnā*
*Aṭiyiṭuvan aṭiyiṭuvan diyā maduru nāgala*
*Balagā gena tun rāga marahayi*

1 *Taprobanian*, Vol. II, p. 122. We are by no means convinced that Nevill was right in seeing jokes and absurdities in these lullabies. He himself notes (*loc. cit.*) "that the people themselves do not altogether understand many words in these..."

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*Mâgo aga kandê kanangê*
*Rajawattê gaṇḍiyaṇḍa wessanna dennê nam*
*Kiṭa kiṭâyê aṭapê rajê wannatta dennê*
*Attha wannangê kaṭa wannangê Nilâgawa dennê nam*
*Ahas rajê dennê yakkhiṇi kaṭattê ajjiyê*
*Ahas rajê ajjiyâwê wannangê wannangê*
*Ajji ammê wannawa kiṭa ammê wannawa*
*Kangaṇa madagala gaha kiṭa wannawê kiṭiyê wannangê*
*Rajawattê gaṇḍiyaṇḍa wessanna dennê nam.*

Darling! Darling! There you see the wind and rain are coming down from outside the Seven Hills. See the rain. See brother, thunder and lightning coming from the direction of the sun. Things are getting bad. My body is losing strength (through fear). Let us two go to the Rājawatta cave (or stone plain). Ha! ha! say two princes, it is not possible to go there, they. Oh, lovely princes! in the forest are yakkhi and gaha. Are we not staying in the palace at night! The sky is growing dark, the earth is getting dark. Are not four fairies sitting at Kangaṇa and Nilāgala? Let us go to the Rājawatta cave.

The following "song asking for presents" was sung by a woman of Bandarawela to the air (No. 20) given on page 349. Although addressed to the *Mahā Nilāmē* (white demon, i.e. white woman) it was not an contemporary composition but was said to have been known to the singer's parents.

IV. *Ahaḷa ahar kaṭâ kiṭi, ahi kiṭi, rat kiṭi, Nilamaṇi ralawa pan-*
*nawa gannawa.*
*Aṭakaṭa ahar dig kiṭi ahawa, ahi dennâkiṭa yannê*
*Aṭakaṭa ahar ahawaṭa nangiṭa dâgiṭi nangiṭi wagêkiṭi gana ai-*
*nawa.*
*Ahi dennâwê yannê dig kiṭi ahawa ahawa.*

White demon (white), (I am) running short of hand leaves[1] and areca nut. White demon, give (us) presents so that we may run away. White demon, the young (or white) younger sister of Nilamaṇi is getting hungry. Give us, give us, presents that we may run away.

The next two songs, both collected at Nilgala, were particularly popular; the first reflects the very high estimate in which a Vedda holds his wife.

V. *Kaṭâkiṭa kawuru ḍiyan nâyagê*
*Kaṭâkiṭa kawuru ḍiyan nâyagê*
*Nilawa kaṭâgiya ḍiyan nâyagê*
*Nilawa kaṭâgiya ḍiyan nâyagê*

[1] In the original *kaṭâ kiṭi* and *ahi kiṭi* both mean hand leaves.

C.G. Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5



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*Wannin ḷāmen ḷaṇa nōyayi*
*Wannen ḷāṇaṇa ḷaṇa nōyayi*
*Kuḍā ḷaṇa nattin ḷaṇa yannēyi*
*Kuḍā ḷaṇa nattin ḷaṇa yannēyi.*

For (want) of grain or food, the life will not depart (i.e. man will not die); owing to cold or wind, the life will not depart; owing to rain or dew, the life will not depart. If there be no wife, the life will depart.

VI. *Tīnan tapāwa tīnānē*
*Man sellā baḷuwak dekka gattīm*
*Man sellā baḷuwak dekka gattīm*
*Mohoṭa mohoṭa koḷa kiri nāne*
*Mohoṭa mohoṭa koḷa kiri nāne*
*Ehema kiyana baḷuwak nowayi madaka gatti koḷa nāne*
*Aru ḷalli tiḷāwa tībānu*
*Dāmbuḷlikkiyu bāla dek gattīm.*

*Tīnan tapāwa tīnānē.*

I have seen a fine thing and taken it. What is it, what is it, oh good *nāne*? *Nāne*, the thing which I saw and picked up is not one that I will mention readily. You *nāne*, what I saw and picked up is the smoking pipe which was on that distant high ground (lit. back high-ground).

[376] The Sinhalese do not smoke pipes, and the Veddas do not smoke at all; on questioning our informants we were told that this song was only two or three generations old and referred to the finding of a pipe dropped by a white sportsman.

The next song recorded at Bandaraduwa alludes to the suicide of two Vedda women and has been referred to already on pages 322 and 323. Only the first part of the song, containing no direct reference to the final tragedy, was taken down.

VII. *Akkinam akkinam yanḍā wārēnan*
*Aṭi dennāgē wannilā enḍēmo nāti*
*Bālanḍa yanḍewa wāri naṅgā*
*Naṅgā nan naṅgā aṭi dennāgē wannilā*
*Duwagena ennan bālanḍā wāri naṅgā nan naṅgā*
*Akki nam akki nam maṭa bāsuru bāri nam bāri nam*
*Naṅgā nam naṅgā nam wāri nam wāri nam*
*Aṭi dennāgē wannilā wellihanḍiyēn duwagen ennan*
*Bālanḍu wārēn.*

Elder sister, elder sister, come to go. Our husbands have not returned; come younger sister, let us go to look for them. Younger sister, younger sister, the husbands of us two are coming running. Younger sister, younger

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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sister, come to look. Elder sister, elder sister, I am afraid, I cannot, I cannot. Younger sister, younger sister, come, come. The husbands of us two are coming running from Wellikandiya. Come and see. 533 539

The next song, collected at Sitala Wanniya, records a fatal accident while honey-gathering; a woman speaks to her sister, so that "elder brother" in the third line should be "elder sister"; "younger brother" is a common periphrasis for husband. Tantirivelo is the name of a rock-face and the "golden jewelled cord" is the *liane* ladder by which the honey-seekers reach the comb (cf. Chapter X, invocation No. XXVI).

VIII. *Tantirivēlo baliyaṭa kāpu*
*Raṇ miṇi kendē gallak kinikī*
*Bāda dennaw mayē kiriṇ ayiyē*
*Apiṭā dennaye mallila dennaṭa*
*Adissī amarukamak eti mayē kiri akkī.*

(At) Tantirivēlo the skilfully (or forcibly) lowered
Golden jewelled cord which is sunk from the rock
Gives an unlucky sign, my dear elder brother.
For the younger brothers of us two
There will be a sudden difficulty, my dear elder sister[1].

The following song, also from Sitala Wanniya, was sung by women to their husbands when the latter returned from honey-seeking without honey. The air to which it was sung is given on page 344 (No. 21).

IX. *Disī mawilī ranhenda elala ilala*
*Kalu raṭē nangilā dunhowuten pannālā*
*Ran kaḍuwēn kapālā ela mōran nāgāṭeyi*
*Mēmullin ihalē kodīyi kiyālā*
*Duwagena dwē wennilā-gollō*
*Ela mōran nalagātō ela gini wadiwigina annō.*

(They) let down, let down the great *mawila* creeper jungle rope, (they) drive away the bees with smoke; (the comb) was cut with the golden sword for the young sisters of Morane. (Our) husbands came running and saying, "Above this corner there is none." The young sisters of Morane are getting hungry.

[1] Mr Parker, to whom we are indebted for the translation of this song, notes that "*gallak* stands for *galak*; *kinikī* appears to be derived from *kinduwanā* to be sunk, and to be the equivalent of *kindiri*.

1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5



533 The next song, transliterated and translated by Mr Parker,
539 was collected at Sitala Wanniya where it was known only to the older men of the community. It was sung only when getting *jak* fruit, and though these Veddas knew the ordinary Sinhalese word for this fruit they told me it would not be used. They explained that there was only one place in their territory where there were two or three *jak* trees (doubtless the remains of old gardens made by Buddhist monks or recluses), that they valued their fruit very highly, and that they would not commonly speak of them by name and certainly would not do so when about to gather the fruit. In this song *bo* tree and *moran* flower are both honorific terms. This suggests that the song has magic power, so that its most appropriate position in this volume would be in Chapter VIII.

X. *Mē yāmeṇ yāmeṭa mē ässa wadunā*
*Mē Bōpata ruwala yan henekunṭa baha dinawanna*
*Mē moraṇ malē misak attiyen barī nan kekkiyen bindala*
*Masi ṭolawaṭa bassala dennayi.*

Here, from watch to watch, this (tree) touched the sky.
No one can cause this Bō-leaf sail to be overcome.
Having broken off with the hook this ripening flower only, if unable (to pluck it) by the hand,
Having lowered it to the earth, I will give it.

*Moran* appears to be *mōrana*.

*Malē* may be a poetical allusion to the fruit.

*Masi ṭolawaṭa* for *mahi ṭolawaṭa*, a pleonastic form, "to the earth's earth," that is, to the ground. Such pleonasms are not uncommon in colloquial village Sinhalese, as for instance, *edā dawasa*, "that day's day," for "that day."

The next two songs were collected at Nilgala; our informants attached no meaning to the first line.

XI. *Mē miṇi mā miṇi mā deyiyā*
*Kāburuhaddī kēbeyiyā*
*Kuduruṇ kuduruṇ kiyannā*
*Kokkā gāṭeṭa wari wāṭā*
*Maddī gāṭeṭa wari wāṭā*
*Maddī gāṭeṭa wari wāṭā*
*Tala ṭiṭeṭa wari wāṭā*
*Kēṭuṇ damana heṭa watuṭiyi*

1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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*Kaḍen paccela yak gumaṭṭ*
*Bimen yannaṭa bol ṗini barimayi*
*Mīwāṗṭen yanu denna*
*Āṇē aṗē wannilā*
*Kobbā̆ walē nagtilā*
*Ēhat biḍagena wattilā*
*Kalina walē nagtilā*
*Ēhat biḍagena waṭṭilā*
*Walkobbā̆ wala dunna namāgena*
*Wewel icagē ṗiṭaṭa damāgena*
*Bulat ṗayiyat ina gannāgen*
*Pōrē ṗaccāt ina gannāgena*
*Kunu gē taḍiyā kuraṭa damāgena*
*Kaḍiyā ballat iccura kuragena*
*Endalu ṗotu ban dena nayidē*
*Endalu ṗotu ban dena nayidē.*

*Mā mini mā mini mā deyiyā.*

The dove of the Kakuru Mountain is singing *kuḍuruṇu, kuḍuruṇu*. There was rain at Kokkāgāla. There was rain at Mādēgāla. There was rain at Mādēgāla. There was rain on the high land. There is muddy water bringing down logs. (There has been) a *yaka* ceremony below the rock. (I) cannot go on the ground as there is dew. Let us ride on the back of the buffalo. Anē! our husbands having climbed up the *kobbā* creeper, on its breaking having fallen; having climbed the *kalina* creeper, on its breaking, too, having fallen; bending the bow (made) of *wal-kobbā*[1] creeper, putting the canes at the back of the head[2], taking the betel bag at the waist, taking the axe at the waist, putting the dirty monitor lizard on the shoulder, sending in front the dog Kaḍiyā, (You are) to come, they say (or he says or we say) Potubanda Nayide, (you are) to come, they say (or he says, or we say) Potubanda Nayide.

XII. *Mā miṇi mā miṇi mā deyiyā*
*Mā miṇi mā miṇi mā deyiyā*
*Āṇē aṗē wannilā*
*Kokkā gālē yanni denna*
*Mādē gālē yanni denna*
*Kokkā gālē bari baburu*
*Mādē gālē bari baburu*
*Kākuru Kandē Kōbeyiyā*
*Kākuru Kandē Kōbeyiyā*
*Kuṭuruṇ kuṭuruṇ kiyanna*

[1] *Alliophyton repbo.*
[2] Or "carrying them hanging round the neck."

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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*Kuṭurup kuṭurup kiyannā*
*Tāla piṭaṭa vaṭi vāṭā*
*Kōṭan dimana hera vaṭuvaṭi*
*Kōṭan dimana hera vaṭuvaṭi*
*Kaḍiu paccalayak gamata*
*Bimen yannēṭa bal piṭi harimayiṭi*
*Madayā piṭen yannā dennā*
*Kaṭiya wala nagiṭa*
*Ēhat bihāgena waṭṭiṭa*
*Kobba wali nagiṭa*
*Ēhat bihāgena waṭṭiṭa*
*Wal-kobbe wala dunna damāgena*
*Wīruvi isagē piṭaṭa damāgena*
*Kaḍiyā ballat iccaraharegena*
*Enḍalu potubanna nayidē*
*Enḍalu potubanna nayidē*
*Mā miṭi mā miṭi mā dēyiyā*
*Mā miṭi mā miṭi mā dēyiyā.*

Ah, our husbands! Let us go to Kokkagala. Let us go to Madegala. (I) cannot go to Kokkagala. I cannot go to Madegala. The dove of the Kaḷuru-kanda is uttering *kuṭurun, kuṭurun*. There has been rain in the high land. There has been muddy water bringing down logs. There has been a *yaka* ceremony (lit. *yaka* house) below the hill. (I) cannot go on the ground as there is dew. Let us ride on the buffalo. Having climbed up the *kāḍiya* creeper, on its breaking having fallen; having climbed up the *kobbe* creeper, on its breaking too, having fallen; putting down the bow (made) of *wal-kobbe* creeper, putting the canes at the back of the head[1]; sending in front the dog Kaḍiyā, (you are) to come, they say (or he says or we say) Potubanda Nayidē. (You are) to come, they say (or he says or we say) Potubanda Nayidē. *Mā miṭi mā miṭi mā dēyiyā, Mā miṭi mā miṭi mā dēyiyā.*

All the remaining songs except the last were collected from the village Veddas of the Uva Bintenne; all are of one type and with a single exception (No. XVII) all are related to each other and to the two songs immediately preceding them which we obtained at Nilgala. No. XVII, the exception just referred to, is extremely Sinhalese in tone and thought. The *gomara* spots referred to are the light patches on the body, due to the attacks of a parasitic fungus, which are much admired by the peasant Sinhalese of Uva and the Eastern Province.

[164]

[1] Or "carrying them hanging round the neck."

1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-6 (1907-1908) 1911
AXS Vedda AXS



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XIII. *Kaliya wala nagila*
*Rataṭa paligena nagila*
*Tunaṭiya poḷlat biddila*
*Tā ya halla genen wat*
*Nandage paduvaṭa mangenala*
*Tānanne hala ātnanne*
*Mundi haḍahiṭa watirila*
*Ōbaṭa wiḍahaw hiri nāṭṭa*
*Iccata wiḍahi icca avi*
*Tunbaṭa leṭṭen nammiḷi*
*Ē madi wiḍahi mari*
*Depiṭa maṭeṇ wilga*
*Perumma marāḷiṭa nāṭṭa*
*Puccā hāḷayi diya bonne*
*Eliya ṭikin ut eneṇa nāṭṭa*
*Cappi cili hil kiyannen*
*Yannaṭa suḍiya nāṭṭa*
*Walhaggiyē cappigē gaḷ*
*Cappige hittara dahanna dahayi*
*Puccā hāḷā diya bonne nanā*
*Tan tadina tan tadinan*
*Mōmiya mentiyi nāmiya*
*Koṭṭiṭhaṭa kana nā hāḷā hāḷayi diya bonne.*

Having climbed up the *kaliya* creeper,
Splitting it in two and having fallen,
Having broken (his?) hip and stick,
Having even brought thy girl,
Having gone to thy mother-in-law's mat (*i.e.* hut).
*Tānanne hala ātnanne.*
The monitor lizard is sprawling on the leg.
Shoot it dear cousin,
Shoot at the head. You will miss the head;
Incline (the arrow) towards the tail, by the ribs.
Shoot (it) in the middle; it will die.
Kill the buffalo, cousin,
Which has smeared (itself) at the pool with mud on both sides.
Having roasted and eaten (part of it) we drink water.
The light is coming, cousin,
The birds say *illilli.*
Must we not go, cousin?
In the bird's nest on the Wal-kon tree
There are two and two bird's eggs.
Having roasted and eaten (them) we drink water, cousin.
*Tan tadina tan tadinan.*
To eat a part, having cut this and eaten (it), we drink water.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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*Dahama dahayi* Sin. *daha dahayi*, two and two, or two by two.

533 The last line appears to refer to the buffalo that was killed.
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XIV. *Hitun tuḍiñat tun tuḍiyānat*
*Hi hoḍiya vaṭi vagiṭi*
*Hitun hinaṭa vaṭiṭi*
*Hi Kokkāgalaṭa mun ḍannā*
*Etun ḍiṭiṭa mun vadannā*
*Etun ḍiṭiyat mun ḍannā*
*Maḍi-galaṭa mun vadannā*
*Etun ḍiṭiyat mun ḍannā*
*Uḍirigalaṭa mun ḍannā*
*Etun ḍiṭiṭa nā vadannā*
*Etun ḍiṭiyat mun ḍannā*
*Hi mandigalaṭa mun ḍannā*
*Etun ḍiṭiyat mun vadannā*
*Waḷanā uṭut lunu haḍiduṭi*
*Waḷanā piṭiṭa yannat hariyan*
*Cenapan cenapaṭa yanna dennā*
*Tenapan tenapaṭa yannat hariyan*
*Siṭun vaḍagiṭa yanna dennā.*

*Hitun tuḍiñat tun tuḍiyānat.*

Having climbed the *hoḍiyawala* creeper, and having fallen to the ground from it, I know the way to Kokkagala. I know the way beyond that also. I do not know the way to Madegala. I know the way beyond that also. I know the way to Uḍirigala. I do not know the way beyond that. I know the way beyond that also. I know the way to that Madegala. I do not know the way beyond that also. Put the ropes on the hunting buffalo. If we cannot go on the back of the hunting buffalo let us go from shelter to shelter. If we cannot go from shelter to shelter, let us go (exposing ourselves) to cold and wind.

XV. *Tun paḷḷiyānan paḷḷiyāni*
*Tāḷaṭa paṭṭiyi paṭṭiyānat*
*Diyaṭa haḍiyo aḷu nerannā*
*Diyaṭa haḍiyi aḷu nerannā*
*Cappi ciḷi hiḷi hiyannā*
*Cappi ciḷi hiḷi hiyannā*
*Ran kuru māpaṭ pepennā*
*Ran kuru māpaṭ pepennā*
*Hi mun kevuda hiyāṭi*
*Hi mun kevuda hiyāṭi*
*Etakoṭa aḷu aru kiri nāṅgā*
*Etakoṭa aḷu aru kiri nāṅgā.*

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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*Tan paḍḍinnan paḍḍinnā*
*Tāppan paṇṇi paḍḍinnā*
*Diyaṇa kallan uṇa nanni*
*Diyaṇa kallayi uṇa nanni*
The birds are twittering[1]
The birds are twittering.
A golden bud face was visible
A golden bud face was visible.
I asked "Who is that?"
I asked "Who is that?"
Then (it was) that dear cousin of ours.
Then (it was) that dear cousin of ours.

XVI. *Tan paḍinnā paḍḍinnā*
*Tānan paṇṇin paḍḍinnā*
*Kaṭaru-kandi kakyi*
*Kaṭaru-kandi kakyi*
*Kaṭaru kaṭaru kiyanni*
*Kaṭaru kaṭaru kiyanni*
*Kawili paṭṭa kaḍi kāṭa*
*Kawili paṭṭa kaḍayi kāṭa*
*Ēṭa paṭṭānni kuwillaru*
*Ēṭa paṭṭānni kuwillaru.*

*Tan paḍinnā paḍḍinnā*
*Tānan paṇṇin paḍḍinnā*
A dove of the *Kaṭaru-kandi* (lit. camphor mountain) is crying *kaṭaru, kaṭaru*. No one has cakes. Eat some grain.

The last three songs are evidently variants of a common theme, or perhaps of a number of common themes, for they suggest that they consist of a number of fragments strung together with little regard for their meaning. They were certainly sung for the pleasure they afforded, and perhaps the incongruity of the subjects alluded to and the abrupt way in which they are introduced amuses the audience. Nevill collected variants of fragments of these songs in the Bintenne which he definitely regards as comic.

The following is the first of these fragments:

*K'uhuru gaya dawa nagilā*
*Ehat kindi gana wattilā*

[1] Literally "the birds are uttering *ulilili*," the last word being onomatopoeic. Mr Parker, to whom we are indebted for the translation of this song, is uncertain of the meaning of the third and fourth lines; perhaps they might be translated "There was a tank of water; we made obeisance."

1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5



*Dânen mâden hrillâ*
*Mâmini mâmini mâ mâ mâyi.*

Having run and climbed up the *kukuru* tree
That breaking having fallen,
Having stuck in the mud up to the knee,
*Mâmini mâmini mâ mâ mâyi.*

Nevill regards this as a "take off of the hymns sung by the celebrant when inspired in the worship of Kiri Amma, a Vedda form of Venus, Pattini, Parvati, or Amman," and he states that the "refrain is that actually used in her honour." Further "the *kukuru* tree is a prickly bush, up which no one could think of climbing, and the utter nonsense is a ridiculous parody on the hymn."

The following is given as comic by the same authority, who draws attention to "both *pata pata* and *danni panni*," being expressions coined from the sound of a heavy body falling whop, whop, or flop, flop, and pulling itself up slowly and with pain.

*Kukuru kande naegilâ*
*Pata pata gâ gana waetilâ*
*Danni panni gâla naegitala*
*Tân nan tadi tadi tâ nâ nâ.*

XVII. *Ayyô nānage dāṭī walalu gigiri dena naḍa daṭdeyi kiri nāṇa*
*Nānage baṇḍaṭa icunu gōmara peṭiwan gōmara icilā*
*Nānage baṇḍaṭa icunu gōmara mayo bandeṭ iciyô*
*Nānaṭa beṇḍaṭu paṇimula ayiyô poṭ paṇi haḍā waṭenna*
*Nanaṭa wiyaṭu paḍura ayiyô keḷin raṭā waṭīga*
*Kadiranwallē beṇḍi wiyanē nangiyat wiyan damannī*
*Ætul wiyan damannī bala ætul wiyan no danna nānā*
*Piṭṭ wiyan damannī ele wina panan wina ennaw nānā*
*Cappi cili bili kiyanni yannaṭa nidikimidiya nāna*
*Oyē keḷalā waccô awidin nāndage paḍuraṭa wiruwala.*

Good wife! Oh what a noise the jingling bells of the bracelet on the two hands of yours (lit. of wife) are making! There are (lit. spread) *gomara* spots (on my body) resembling the *gomara* spots on (lit. spread on) my wife's waist. The *gomara* spots which are (lit. spread) on (my) wife's waist (are) spread on my waist also. Oh! the thickened honey of the honey packet made up (lit. tied up) for (my) wife is dripping. Oh! the coloured stripes of the mat woven for (my) wife are gone straight. A canopy is tied to Kadiranwalla. The younger sister is also putting up canopies. She is

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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putting up inner canopies. Oh wife! do not put up inner canopies. She is putting up outer canopies. Wife, bring white canopies and leaf canopies. The birds are chirping[1]. Wife, rise up from sleep to go. The calves (or oxen) having come after playing in the river went to (my) mother-in-law's[2] hut.

The last song was collected at Unuwatura Bubula.

XVIII. (1) *Aṇḍā diya duwana māwili gaṅgāwē*
*Sorabora wilē wilpatulen enawāda*
*Atat damā dætaka ena nurāwā*
*Sālā piṭawala yak gammal*
*Sālā piṭawala wæhi wæhælā bora waturayi*

(2) *Bimin yanna bæri nan*
*Wadanā mīmaṭa lanu bæṁdapan*
*Ten tedinā*
*Aṅgaru neṭun naṭannē*
*Sellan bera pada gasāpan.*

(1) Oh Māwili river! whose water is flowing, making a sound! Are you coming from the bottom of the lake Soraborawila? Oh lover! who comes in two directions, having put (your) hand also (round her neck). There has been *yaka* ceremony at Salapitawala. It having rained, there is muddy water at Salapitawala.

(2) If you cannot go walking (lit. on the ground) put the ropes on the hunting buffalo.
*Ten tedinā*
They are dancing gesture dances[3].
Play a tune on the drum (used) for games.

This song very clearly shows the composite nature of some of the Vedda songs, especially those in use among the more sophisticated groups. The first two lines of the first verse and the last two lines of the second verse are obviously related to, if they are not derived from, the invocation sung at the *Kolomaduwa* ceremony (Chapter X, No. XXXIX), while the first two lines of the last verse refer to harnessing a buffalo as in the preceding songs.

[1] Lit. uttering *silibili*.
[2] [*Nenda* presumably for *nenda* from *nendamma* a paternal aunt or maternal uncle's wife, hence mother-in-law, cf. pp. 64 and 65.]
[3] We are indebted to Mr Parker for the following note. "*Angaru naṭun naṭannē* may be 'dancing gesture-dances' or 'dancer of gesture-dances.' *Angarayo* is stated by Clough to be 'gesture,' the particular gesture of the Malabar dancing girls."

5: Spittel D-5 (ca. 1920) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5



turned in like a child's, fell to my share. I was contemplating the proposition with disgust, when, to my surprise, I saw my companion bravely tackling his; he recommended the meat as savoury. Not to be outdone, I gingerly followed his example, remembering that the nearer the bone the cleaner the flesh. While our chauffeur not only refused his share, but turned away with green-visaged disgust at the behaviour of his masters. The Veddas meanwhile applied themselves heartily to the meal, crunching hungrily bones and all; the brain and liver they regarded as special delicacies. 262

Our next course was a fragment of *kurrukkan* cake garnished with a pungent *sambol*; this was a more feasible dish—but for the sand one crunched with every bite. A handful of honey-comb brought the dreadful meal to a welcome close. It did not occur to our hosts that water for cleansing would be acceptable; a procedure they ignored, wiping their hands instead on the posts of the hut, their own bodies, or filthy loin-rags. The chatty in which they brought us water could no more stand on its base than an egg. 515

So far we had seen none of their women, but had heard subdued female voices in the adjoining room, and surprised the glint of dark inquisitive eyes between the bark-slats. It required no little persuasion to bring them out. Even to pose for their portraits these people wanted presents! There was not a woman among them who had the remotest pretensions to comeliness; what little of it they might possess, their graceless rags disguised. 123

About a half-mile from Handuna's hut were the dwellings of the one-eyed Poromola and the sophisticated Kaira. We found the former disconsolately seated in his airy shed, with a little child on his lap, no less wistful than its grandsire. Patiently they awaited the return of the old man's wife and daughter, with the handful of grain they would earn for the day by working on a *chena*. 361 464 465

We secured some bows and arrows of fine workmanship here, and an *aude* which we mistook for a large arrow-head; but Kaira taking it said, "This is what we dance with," and suiting the action to the word, twirled the implement, tang and point, between his fingers, or shouldered it gun-wise, while he performed the shuffling semi-circular movements of a Vedda dance. 411 535

Thus ended our visit to Henebedde. That night, as we lay in bed, we heard a Vedda stave shouted lustily into the dark. It came from the watcher of a neighbouring field on his lonely look-out, and served as a variant to the "hoos" with which he kept away foraging animals. The refrain, *Ma mini, ma mini, ma deyya*, (Oh! great man, oh! great man, oh! great God) told of soul-hunger even in a people so primitive. We took it for a token of hail and farewell from the land of the Veddas. 241 533

Embillene's only claim to a name lay in the open *ambalam* (travellers' lodge), built high on strong posts that elephants might pass through without being tempted to destroy it. Here we found a team of pack-bulls and their drovers. The head of the *tavalam** was a loquacious fellow who took the whole forest into his confidence. People as a rule talk quietly in the jungle, subconsciously respecting, as it were, its solemnity; not so these drovers; their discourse is high-pitched, from 000

*Team of pack bulls.

5: Spittel D-5 (ca. 1920) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5
Sinhalese AX4



to something; but it was long before I saw the bird, a veritable leaf among the leaves and more motionless than they.

The hilly jungles of central Ceylon echo, during certain seasons of the year, to this bird's incessant cry, the popular onomatopoeic renderings of which are, in English, "Captain Philpotts" and "Bring the tappal" and in Sinhalese "*Botuakappan*." Most people have heard, but very few seen, the shy author of these dolorous notes. There is a gruesome story associated with the bird:—A Sinhalese king once asked his dhoby, in order to test his marital fidelity, whether he would cut his wife's neck and bring him her head! "Oh! king," said the man falling at the monarch's feet, "even if you behead me I cannot do such a thing." The following day the king called up the dhoby's wife and made a similar request of her. She replied that she would do it. Going home she helped her husband with his bath, rubbed boiled limes on his head, and cooked him a good meal. Like a good wife she asked him to lay his head on her lap where he soon fell asleep. Then, with a knife she had in readiness, she cut his throat; and severing his neck, put the head into a pot, covered it with a cloth and carried it to the king. On the way she met a man who, singing, asked her, "What do you carry in the pot on your head?"

"I am taking *mee amba** to the king," answered the woman.

"Why cover it so carefully?" sang he.

"If I take them uncovered, wayfarers will ask me for them," she replied. "It is on a fine journey I go."

When she brought her gift to the king, he was incensed at her cruelty, and ordered her head to be struck off instantly. Ever after, has she gone about in the form of this bird, crying *botua-kappan* (cut the throat), as her one refrain.

While making our way through a tree-studded glade, we surprised two men carrying sacks of dried meat on their shoulders; through rents in the bags peeped unsavoury scraps of sambur, monkey and pig. Their first impulse on seeing us was to escape; for to shoot sambur legitimately, gun and game licences are necessary; and what money have they for these, who have barely the wherewithal to purchase the ammunition for their ramshackle muzzle-loaders.

When we camped, Kombua regaled us with Vedda songs of questionable taste chanted rapidly in a high nasal monotone, lengthened indefinitely by endless repetition, and accompanied in the last staves with a clapping of hands. To the suggestion that he should show his skill in archery he responded with alacrity; jumping up, he seized his weapons as if confident of skill. A fragment of paper, six inches square, placed fifteen paces away, was the mark. At the word he loosed his arrow. A clean miss! He walked up to the target and dashed it down in dudgeon, and nothing would induce him to shoot again. Archery is a lost art to the Veddas, though they still have considerable skill in fashioning bows and arrows. Jungles that echo to guns are no places for bowmen.

Kombua's farewell was as bizarre as his greeting of us. Tossing head and hands in the direction we were taking, and tapping us on the chest, he wished us good going in tones more peremptory than complaisant.

Quite a number of our carriers were half-Veddas. There was one whose constant occupation was to run his fingers comb-fashion through his upstanding hair scraping out vermin. His expression was of that thoughtful seriousness which is the surest mark of profound vacuity.

*A species of mango.

5: Spittel D-5 (ca. 1920) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5



## HIVES

There are five varieties of honey bee in Ceylon :—The large *bambara* (*Apis dorsata*) that builds huge combs of very pure wax on bare hill sides and the large branches of lofty trees ; the *mee massa* (*Apis indica*) sweetest honey bee of all, whose combs are to be found in hollow trees, rock-clefts and within ant-hills ; the *dandual massa* (*Apis florea*), the smallest honey-bee in the world, that hives on rocks and boughs ; the *kanava massa* (Rosin or Dammar bee) a docile, stingless, friendly little creature whose long black combs within tree crevices yield a delicious, if heady, honey ; the *kotha massa*, an even smaller species, whose puny comb is hardly worth the taking. 222 136

*Kanava* and *kotha* combs are available all the year round ; they are the *pathinchikarayas* or stayers. If the Vedda is hungry it is for one of these he goes at a pinch. The *bambara* and *mee massa*, the most abundant honey makers, are seasonal in their habits ; and June and July are the great honey months ; the fruit season synchronising with this, marks these months as the festive time of the jungle ; then the Veddas leave their homes for caves and stream beds, take their fill, and have a surplus for barter. 222 [439]

On the flavours of honey the Veddas are connoisseurs. They can tell by tasting a comb the flower or medley of flowers that contributed to its making. That honey is relished most which prevails when the *mora*, *veera* and *galseembela* are in bloom. [151 262]

Honey gathering is the master art of the Vedda. Supreme as he is in other jungle crafts, he is supremest in this. As he travels through the forest he is alive to the faintest hum, and no hive, however concealed, escapes him. His adroitness in tracking a bee to its lair is well described in a delightfully euphonious song they have (beginning, *Thomba, thomba Gomba me-na-na*), that tells of a Vedda Thutha who goes on the honey quest with his brothers Gomba and Naga. Thutha leads in the trail of a particular bee ; and as he goes he sings to his brothers, indicating various trees in which bees are busy ; but not decoyed by these, and with his eye steadily on the bee he first sighted, he follows it, till eventually it guides him to its hive within the skull of an elephant—*kolanathe gatche* (tree without leaves) as he quaintly describes. [533]

The taking of any hive, other than that of the rock *bambara*, is a very simple thing for the Vedda. All he does is to climb the tree, steady himself at the hole containing the comb, and blow into it to drive the bees away. Then with his axe he enlarges the opening sufficiently to enable him to introduce a hand and secure the cache, stopping every now and then to blow inside or to slap an offending bee. He eats the comb at his perch, grubs and all, throwing down fragments to those below.

The *bambara* comb is quite a different proposition. These great bees build high on the precipitous sides of rocks ; their security lying not in their seclusion but in their inaccessibility. These hives are the prize of the bold and skilful only. A dangling cane at Westminster Abbey gave us some idea of the daring of the enterprise. To reach the combs ladders of vines are lowered from the summit of the rock ; and down these the collector descends ; as this does not bring him within arm's length of the hives, he has usually to rely on the use of a long stake. Sometimes [417 481]

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222 And as he works he sings the cutter's song* and many a vulgar song besides. For this is the epic event of the Vedda's life, and never is he so happy as when engaged in the perilous work. Wild is the jungle night and the rocks around re-echo to his song.

[533 152]

[439]

The honey-gatherer at work

When the "devil's mouth" is full, he releases it from the ladder and shouts "*adapo*" (lift) to those above; they pull on the attached rope. With a series of short jerks, the cutter climbing and helping from below, the honey is lifted. As each pull brings the vessel to the level of the cutter's head he calls out "*ho-ho*," and the hauling is stopped; then, climbing a rung or two he gives a helping hand and cries "*adapo*" again. And so, with "*adapo..... ho-ho*" following each other in quick succession, the precious freight is safely hauled over the edge of the cliff. It may be that the cutter has to descend to his work again. With the last load he climbs over the top, a figure to behold—sweating, exhausted, honey-bedaubed, bereft of all the stamina that has sustained him so long. He throws himself down. Nor have all his arts availed him against the bees, for he is covered with stings. Solicitously his wife and a friend or two group round him, and with pitying words pick off the stings. But, impatient of this, he besmears himself with sand that the ants may not worry him, and is soon asleep.

Such is the story behind the potful of *bambara* honey the Vedda offers for a trifle of grain or a fragment of cloth.

*Borri, borri, borri, borri,*
*Borri, borri, borri, borri.*
*Ama, ama,*
*Aramaya, aramaya, aramaya, aramaya,*
*Thelung badonage adung padung kothoi koyya*
*Esale karale pelang anda kanthulang*
*Gegung thoegena yanna*
*Aiutta Vanniya!*